

Roots

This week's recipes

This week James turns his attention to roots. He shows how marshmallow and liquorice roots can be easily grown in the garden and how they can be combined to make a soothing syrup to relieve the discomfort of a cough.

Valerian is used to create a delicious hot chocolate, which could help to relieve stress. A homemade tincture is made from echinacea, which is used to make spicy ice-lollies that could help fight a cold. And ginger is made into some tasty treats, which could help people with travel sickness.

These recipes are taken from the book 'Grow Your Own Drugs', published by HarperCollins.

Marshmallow and liquorice cough syrup

If using dried marshmallow root: 100g dried marshmallow root, 100g chopped roughly dried liquorice roots, 100g broken up into small pieces heads/bunches fresh elderberries 100g tsp cloves Peel of 1 mandarin 100g tsp aniseed seeds 100g sprig fresh eucalyptus leaves (about 8) 100g ml water 100g ml honey Juice of 1 lime 100g tsp glycerine

If using fresh marshmallow root: 100g fresh marshmallow root, 100g chopped roughly dried liquorice roots, 100g broken up into small pieces Other ingredients as above

1. Put the marshmallow, liquorice, elderberries, cloves, mandarin peel, aniseed and eucalyptus leaves into a pan with the water. Simmer until the liquid is reduced by one-fifth. Remove the liquorice and eucalyptus leaves and discard.
2. Blend the mixture in a liquidizer until smooth. Pour back into the pan and add the honey, lime juice and glycerine, then stir and simmer for 2 minutes.
3. Pour into sterilized, clear 250 ml bottles.

USE: Take 2 tbsp, 3 times a day for no more than 5 days.

STORAGE: Keep refrigerated. Use within 2 weeks.

Valerian hot chocolate for anxiety

Makes 3 cups: 100g fresh valerian root 100g fresh lemon balm leaves 100g tsp fresh lavender flowers leaves and 3 heads from fresh passion flowers Peel of 1 1/2 oranges 100g ml full-fat milk 100g g dark chocolate (minimum 50% cocoa solids) Dash of vanilla extract

1. Chop the top and bottom from the fresh valerian root. Add the valerian, lemon balm, lavender, passion flowers, orange peel, and milk to a pan and gently heat for 5-10 minutes. Strain.
2. Pour the infused milk back into the pan, then add the dark chocolate and vanilla extract and stir until melted. Drink at once.

USE: You can drink up to 3 cups a day for 2 weeks at a time.

NB. Valerian can cause drowsiness so check with your doctor if you're taking anti-depressants.

or sleeping pills.

Crystallized ginger for nausea

Makes about 250 g: g fresh ginger root Golden caster sugar, to match weight of cooked ginger plus extra for sprinkling.

1. Peel the fresh ginger root and thinly slice.
2. Put the ginger in a heavy-bottomed saucepan and cover with water, adding more to allow for evaporation. Bring to the boil and partly cover with a lid. Boil gently for 1 hour, or until the ginger is almost cooked but slightly al dente; the time will vary slightly depending on the freshness of ginger.
3. Drain the ginger and weigh it. Put it back in the saucepan with an equal amount of golden caster sugar. Add 2 tbsp water. Bring to the boil, then simmer over a medium heat, stirring with a wooden spoon for 20 minutes, or until it starts to go gloopy and the ginger becomes transparent.
4. Reduce the heat and keep stirring until it starts to crystallize and easily piles up in the middle of the pan.
5. Meanwhile take a large, deep, baking tray and sprinkle caster sugar on it. Tip the ginger into the baking tray and shuffle it round in the caster sugar. Separate any clumps of ginger pieces. Place in a sterilized jar.

USE: Chew on a piece of crystallized ginger when you feel nauseous.

STORAGE: Keeps in a cool place for 3-6 months.

Echinacea ice lollies

To make the tincture: g fresh echinacea root ml vodka For the ice lollies: medium-sized red chilli root ginger ml honey sachet animal gelatine ml cranberry juice Juice of 2 large lemons ml Echinacea Tincture (see above)

1. Wash and chop the echinacea root, then put in a jar and pour over the vodka to cover completely. Leave for 2-4 weeks.
2. Wash and slice the chillis. Peel and thinly slice the ginger.
3. Combine the chillis, ginger, honey, gelatine and cranberry juice in a saucepan, then stir and simmer for 5 minutes. Take off the heat and leave to cool. Sieve into a bowl.
4. When the drained liquid is cool, stir in the lemon juice and Echinacea Tincture. Pour into ice lolly moulds and freeze.

NB. Contains alcohol so not suitable for children.

Use: Take during colds and infection - 1 a day for up to 2 weeks. Each lolly contains one typical dose of Echinacea.

STORAGE: The lollies keep in the freezer for 3 months.